

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the claims will serve to replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

--1-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) A dental hygiene apparatus for enabling a flossing of teeth, the dental hygiene apparatus comprising:

a dispensing member;

a dispensing bobbin for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member wherein the dispensing bobbin is rotatably retained relative to the dispensing member;

an activating switch operably associated with the means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member for selectively enabling a dispensing of dental floss from the dispensing member;

The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 3 further comprising a means for preventing an accumulation of dental floss relative to the dispensing member including during a triggering of the activating switch comprising a means for ensuring unidirectional, dispensing rotation of the dispensing bobbin;

an accumulating member structurally separate from the dispensing member; and

a means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member;

whereby dental floss can be dispensed from the dispensing member and accumulated by the accumulating member.

5. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 4 wherein the activating switch enables a dispensing of a predetermined length of dental floss.

6. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 4 wherein the accumulating member comprises an accumulating ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

7. (currently amended) A dental hygiene apparatus for enabling a flossing of teeth, the dental hygiene apparatus comprising:

a dispensing member The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 6 wherein the dispensing member comprises comprising a dispensing ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

a dispensing bobbin for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member wherein the dispensing bobbin is rotatably retained relative to the dispensing member;

an accumulating member structurally separate from the dispensing member comprising an accumulating ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user; and

an accumulating bobbin for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member wherein the accumulating bobbin is rotatably retained relative to the accumulating member;

whereby dental floss can be dispensed from the dispensing member and accumulated by the accumulating member.

8. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 6 further comprising an activating switch operably associated with the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the

accumulating member for selectively enabling a retraction of dental floss relative to the accumulating member.

9. (currently amended) A dental hygiene apparatus for enabling a flossing of teeth, the dental hygiene apparatus comprising:

a dispensing member;

a means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member;

an accumulating member structurally separate from the dispensing member;

a means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member;

an activating switch operably associated with the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member for selectively enabling a retraction of dental floss relative to the accumulating member;

The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a means for inducing an automatic accumulation of dental floss relative to the accumulating member during a triggering of the activating switch;

whereby dental floss can be dispensed from the dispensing member and accumulated by the accumulating member.

10. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a locking means for preventing a retraction of dental floss from the accumulating member including during a triggering of the activating switch.

11. (currently amended) A dental hygiene apparatus for enabling a flossing of teeth, the dental hygiene apparatus comprising:

a dispensing member;

a means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member;

an accumulating member structurally separate from the dispensing member; and

a means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member;

The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 7 wherein the dispensing member and the accumulating member are color coded

whereby dental floss can be dispensed from the dispensing member and accumulated by the accumulating member.

12. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 7 or 9 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member comprises a dispensing bobbin rotatably retained relative to the dispensing ring and wherein the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member comprises an accumulating bobbin rotatably retained relative to the accumulating ring.

13. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 12 wherein the dispensing bobbin is disposed within a housing of the dispensing ring and wherein the accumulating bobbin is disposed within a housing of the accumulating ring.

14. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an

aperture in the accumulating ring for enabling a passage of dental floss therethrough and further comprising a scrubber element retained relative to the accumulating ring adjacent to the aperture.

15. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an activating means operably associated with the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating ring for selectively enabling a rotation of the accumulating bobbin to yield a retraction of dental floss relative to the accumulating ring.

16. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 15 wherein the activating means comprises an activating switch in combination with a means for automatically rotating the accumulating bobbin.

17. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 16 wherein the activating means further comprises a means for selectively engaging the activating switch with the accumulating bobbin wherein a triggering of the activating switch disengages the activating switch relative to the accumulating bobbin.

18. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 16 wherein the means for automatically rotating the accumulating bobbin comprises a coil spring and further comprising a means for enabling a winding of the coil spring.

19. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a

means for varying sizes of the apertures in the dispensing ring and the accumulating ring.

20. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 19 wherein the means for varying sizes of the apertures in the dispensing ring and the accumulating ring each comprises at least one removable sizing member.

21. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 19 wherein the means for varying sizes of the apertures in the dispensing ring and the accumulating ring each comprises an insert with an outer annular surface for engaging the aperture in the dispensing ring or the accumulating ring and an inner annular surface defining an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

22. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a means for enabling a removal and replacement of the accumulating bobbin relative to the housing of the accumulating member.

23. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 4 or 9 further comprising a scrubber element retained relative to the accumulating member wherein the scrubber element is removable and replaceable relative to the accumulating member.

24. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a finger shield arrangement comprising a tubular member for receiving a finger of a user in a mating relationship.

25. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 24 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user.

26. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 25 wherein the means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user comprises an adhesive tab.

27. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 24 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a second tubular member separably coupled to the tubular member.

28. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 27 wherein the tubular member and the second tubular member are separably coupled by a first adhesive tab fixed to the tubular member and a second adhesive tab fixed to the second tubular member whereby the first and second adhesive tabs can be separated to enable a separation of the tubular member and the second tubular member.

29-31. (canceled)

32. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 31 wherein the floss retaining shell is barrel-shaped with a first end and a second end and wherein the activating trigger is disposed at the first end of the floss retaining shell.

33-34. (canceled)

35. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user comprises a ring member coupled to the floss retaining member for receiving a finger of the user.

36. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a means for adjusting a circumference of the ring member.

37. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 35 wherein the means for retaining the floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user further comprises a second ring member coupled to the floss retaining member.

38. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user comprises an opposed hook arrangement coupled to the floss retaining member.

39. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 38 wherein the opposed hook arrangement is coupled to the floss retaining member by a post.

40. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 39 wherein the post is extensible and retractable in effective length.

41. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user includes a post with a proximal end adjacent to the floss retaining member and a distal end and wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member includes a means for transferring dental floss relative to the distal end of the post.

42. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 41 wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating trigger.

43. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 42 wherein the activating trigger is disposed adjacent to the distal end of the post.

44. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user comprises a band member coupled to the floss retaining member.

45. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 44 further comprising a means for adjusting a circumference of the band member.

46-48. (canceled)

49. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 46 50 further comprising a

means for varying size of the aperture in the ring.

50. (currently amended) A dental hygiene apparatus comprising:
a floss retaining member comprising a first ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user and a means for retaining dental floss within the ring. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 46 wherein the floss retaining member further comprises a second ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user, and a means for retaining dental floss within the second ring whereby the floss retaining member comprises floss retaining knuckles; and
a means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member.

51. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 50 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a floss retaining bobbin retained relative to the ring and a floss retaining bobbin retained relative to the second ring.

52. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 50 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a bobbin that surrounds the apertures in the ring and the second ring.

53. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 52 wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating trigger operably associated with the floss retaining member.

54. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 further comprising a finger shield arrangement comprising a tubular member for receiving a finger of a user in a mating relationship.

55. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 54 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user.

56. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 55 wherein the means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user comprises an adhesive tab.

57. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 54 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a second tubular member separably coupled to the tubular member.

58. (withdrawn) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 57 wherein the tubular member and the second tubular member are separably coupled by a first adhesive tab fixed to the tubular member and a second adhesive tab fixed to the second tubular member.

59. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 50 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a floss retaining bobbin and wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating switch in combination with a means for rotating the floss retaining bobbin.

60. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 59 wherein the activating means further comprises a means for selectively engaging the activating switch with the floss retaining bobbin.

61. (previously presented) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 59 wherein the means for rotating the floss retaining bobbin comprises a coil spring and further comprising a means for enabling a winding of the coil spring.

62. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 50 further comprising a scrubber element retained relative to the floss retaining member wherein the scrubber element is removable and replaceable relative to the floss retaining member.

63. (currently amended) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 50 wherein the floss retaining shell is disk-shaped and wherein the activating trigger is disposed on the floss retaining shell.

64. (new) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 4 wherein the means ensuring a unidirectional rotation of the dispensing bobbin comprises a ratchet arrangement.

65. (new) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 9 wherein the means for inducing an automatic accumulation of dental floss relative to the accumulating member during a triggering of the activating switch comprises a means for automatically rotating the accumulating bobbin.

66. (new) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 65 wherein the means for automatically rotating the accumulating bobbin comprises a coil spring and further comprising a means for enabling a winding of the coil spring.

67. (new) A dental hygiene apparatus for enabling a flossing of teeth, the dental hygiene apparatus comprising:

a dispensing member;

a dispensing bobbin for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member wherein the dispensing bobbin is rotatably retained relative to the dispensing member;

an accumulating member structurally separate from the dispensing member;

an accumulating bobbin for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member wherein the accumulating bobbin is rotatably retained relative to the accumulating member;

wherein the dispensing bobbin is enclosed within a housing of the dispensing member and wherein the accumulating bobbin is enclosed within a housing of the accumulating member;

whereby dental floss can be dispensed from the dispensing member and accumulated by the accumulating member.

68. (new) The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 67 further comprising an activating switch operably associated with the accumulating bobbin for selectively enabling a retraction of dental floss relative to the accumulating member and a means for inducing an automatic rotation of the bobbin during a triggering of the activating switch. --